



State Waives Fee for Christmas Trees Headed to Service Members Overseas

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MADISON – The state is once again waiving its fee for certificates needed to send real Wisconsin Christmas trees to those on active military duty overseas, but don't delay – the paperwork takes time.

Trees shipped out of the country need to be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate. "This certifies to plant health authorities in the nation where the tree is going that it is not carrying pests or diseases that could infect plants there," says Greg Helmbrecht, a plant health specialist with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

For trees sent by individuals or families to their active military duty family members overseas, DATCP will waive its portion of the usual \$50 fee. That will reduce the fee to \$6, which goes to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Here's what you need to do:

- Check with the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial shipper to find out the size, weight and pricing requirements, so you can buy the right size tree.
- Get your tree from a licensed Wisconsin Christmas tree grower who has a plant health certificate, and get a copy of the certificate. You can find a list of licensed growers at <http://datcp.wi.gov/uploads/Plants/xls/ChristmasTreeGrowers.xls>. Call ahead to be sure trees are available this early, and ask whether the grower has a health certificate.
- Call or email Helmbrecht to request a phyto certificate: greg.helmbrecht@wi.gov, 608-224-4596. Be sure to tell him that the tree is going to an active duty military family member overseas.
- When you receive the phyto certificate, take the tree to your shipper for packing or pack as directed by the shipper. Remember the certificate must go with the tree.

Helmbrecht advises that soft-needed trees like balsams and Fraser firs ship best, and trees should be bundled as tightly as possible.

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